

Congressman Keith Rothfus (PA-12)
Testimony before The Joint Select Committee
on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform
Members' Day Hearing: How to Significantly Reform the Budget and Appropriations
Process
June 27, 2018

Co-Chairman Womack, Co-Chairman Lowe, and Honorable Members of the Committee:

- Thank you for holding this important hearing today on a subject of such significance to our constituents.
- Here in Washington we hear so much about how our system is broken and Congress doesn't work, but I don't think we understand how profoundly broken it is.
- In the over four decades under our current budgeting process, Congress has only passed all 12 appropriations bills *4 times*.
- Think about that – failing to follow regular order isn't the exception, it's the norm.
- Due to this chronic failure, we in congress are forced to vote on massive omnibus packages and continuing resolutions – often with very little time to read them.
- We are constantly presented a false choice between voting on these cumbersome bills or letting the government shut down.
- When we are voting on legislation hundreds of pages long with very little notice, we cannot accurately represent our districts.
- This haphazard budgeting process also makes it virtually impossible to actually cut spending in any meaningful way while our national debt continues to explode.

- Further, it seems every time we pass one of these monstrosities, we hear about more provisions that seemingly nobody knew were included.
- This is absurd and it needs to change.
- Issues should be debated on their merits one at a time, we should have ample time to dissect and read all bills considered, and we should allow for feedback from our districts before taking a vote.
- It's for these reasons that in previous years I introduced the Pay for Performance Act.
- This legislation would have withheld paychecks for either chamber if they failed to complete all 12 appropriations bills.
- Perhaps an incentive like this is needed to get our process back in order – or maybe we need a new process entirely.
- Either way a 90% failure rate is unacceptable by any metric and we should demand better.
- It is our duty as lawmakers to listen to our constituents and get back to a process that is efficient, transparent, and democratic.
- Again, I sincerely thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee, and I look forward to working with all my colleagues on improving how Congress works.
- I welcome any questions that you may have.